

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 632

By Southerland

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the Greeneville Arts Council upon the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize those venerable cultural institutions that exist to foster and perpetuate the arts and, in doing so, contribute significantly to the public good; and

WHEREAS, one such organization is the Greeneville Arts Council (GAC), which is this year celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, marking five decades of arts advocacy in Greene County; and

WHEREAS, in honor of its golden anniversary, GAC has planned a series of fundraisers to support the program's original mission, the same mission that guides the organization today: to promote the arts throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, originally known as the Greeneville Arts Guild, GAC traces its beginnings back to the arrival of Clem Allison in 1966; a skilled painter who relocated to Greeneville to establish Tusculum College's art department, he was instrumental in the group's founding; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Allison partnered with Mary Jane Coleman soon after settling in Greeneville; Ms. Coleman was active with the Youth Builders of Greeneville, an organization that was supportive of her vision of bringing in art exhibits to benefit children throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1967, the first such exhibit was set up in the now-remodeled lobby of the Greeneville Light & Power System building; though the GAC had not yet been formally established, the seeds were sown; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Allison and Ms. Coleman talked with Greene County and Greeneville City schools superintendents to arrange for the students of these school systems to travel by bus to experience the exhibit, a program that continued for nearly a decade; after the success of the first exhibit, efforts were made to officially form the nonprofit arts group; and

WHEREAS, strong leadership formed a solid foundation that set the council on a path of success for the next five decades; GAC averaged around nine shows each year, one of which was a big show in the spring and featured artists from places near and far. An exhibit showcasing Australian art brought the Australian ambassador and several Washington, D.C., dignitaries to Greeneville; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Coleman enlisted photographer Jack Schrader to spend a summer making a series of photographs of Greeneville and Greene County; this collection of photographs was shown at Tusculum College before it traveled throughout the State for a year. It is currently housed at the Greeneville-Greene County History Museum; and

WHEREAS, as one of the first members of the Tennessee Arts Commission, Mary Jane Coleman tapped into her network and organized a film festival called Sinking Creek Film Celebration, which would eventually become the prestigious, Academy-Award-qualifying Nashville Film Festival, the longest-running film festival in the South; in its initial iteration in Greene County, the festival featured films and documentaries from up-and-comers and students who had their work judged by a panel of prominent filmmakers; and

WHEREAS, currently, GAC supports the arts in Greeneville and Greene County by offering free monthly exhibits at the Mason House Gallery, which feature traditional media as well as fiber arts, jewelry, sculpture, 2-D work, and photographs; providing grants to area schools for art programs and supplies; sponsoring a summer art camp for students; and collaborating with the Boys & Girls Club of Greeneville and Greene County on various art initiatives; and

WHEREAS, GAC also awards the \$2,000 Mary Jane Coleman Scholarship to posthumously honor the beloved founder who did so much to launch and grow the organization and bring quality art to area students; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Clem Allison, who has reprised his role as president, marking his third time at the helm of the organization, GAC hopes to continue its fruitful partnerships with area businesses and city and county leadership; in addition to increasing visibility in the community, GAC will seek to continue its legacy programs and expand to do even more to help schools in Greene County promote the arts; and

WHEREAS, the Greeneville Arts Council has enriched the arts and culture of Greene County and the lives of its citizens for five decades, and it is fitting that the organization be honored; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend the Greeneville Arts Council upon the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, extending our sincere gratitude for the good work of this organization and our best wishes for its continued success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.